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# MANAGING CHANGE IN THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Gardens and Designed Landscapes

September 2016





Above: Ardtornish, Highland (GDL00024). A new biomass boiler was recently constructed within the Inventory site. The planning application was accompanied by a design and access statement which addressed the impact of the proposed change, set against the significance of the site. The resulting building has been carefully located and designed to minimise its impact on the designed landscape and the setting of the listed house. © Jennie Robertson

Cover image: Colonsay House, Argyll & Bute (GDL00106). An informal designed landscape containing an extensive woodland garden of outstanding horticultural value set within the rugged Hebridean landscape. © Historic Environment Scotland

# MANAGING CHANGE IS A SERIES OF NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE NOTES ABOUT MANAGING CHANGE IN THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT. THEY EXPLAIN HOW TO APPLY GOVERNMENT POLICIES.

The aim of the series is to identify the main issues which can arise in different situations, to advise how best to deal with these, and to offer further sources of information. They are also intended to inform planning policies and the determination of applications relating to the historic environment.

# INTRODUCTION

This note sets out the principles that apply to developments affecting Inventory gardens and designed landscapes, and the roles and responsibilities that organisations have to care for and protect them. It should inform planning policies and help with decisions relating to planning applications affecting Inventory sites. It also provides guidance on how to manage the impact of change – respecting the inherent value of these sites in the context of a dynamic and changing environment.

The focus of this guidance note is on those sites that meet the criteria for national importance and are included on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. The same general principles apply to development proposals that affect gardens and designed landscapes of regional and local importance.

# KEY ISSUES

1. Gardens and designed landscapes are an important element of Scotland's historic environment.
2. The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes is a list of nationally important gardens and designed landscapes. Sites on the Inventory are given special consideration in the planning and other land-use systems (such as long-term forestry planning).
3. The Inventory identifies gardens and designed landscapes of national importance, and provides information on them. It informs the management of change in these areas.
4. To ensure that the most important gardens and designed landscapes survive, change should be managed to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the significant elements.
5. Planning authorities should take gardens and designed landscapes into account when preparing local development plans and making decisions on planning applications.
6. Planning authorities are also encouraged to develop policies to identify and manage regionally and locally important (non-Inventory) gardens and designed landscapes.



# I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

7. All public bodies should take Inventory sites into account when preparing plans, policies and strategies.
8. Landscape management plans help to develop a longer-term vision for engaging owners and land managers in managing change sensitively.

The Necropolis, Glasgow (GDL00366). Set on a prominent hill above Glasgow Cathedral, this is one of Scotland's first planned garden cemeteries and contains outstanding architectural features by eminent designers such as Thomas Hamilton and Alexander 'Greek' Thomson. © Historic Environment Scotland



Gardens and designed landscapes are a significant element of Scotland's historic environment. Legislation defines them as grounds that are consciously laid out for artistic effect. They usually include a combination of planting, land-forming (for example creating artificial slopes), built structures, open grounds, water management and natural landscape features. All of these may contribute to the value of the site.

Gardens and designed landscapes contribute greatly to our culture. They enrich the texture and pattern of the Scottish landscape, and form a unique resource with complex historical, cultural and landscape components. Gardens and designed landscapes reflect centuries of social, cultural and economic change.

Many of the sites on the Inventory are living examples of unique artistic talent. They may be the setting of listed buildings and scheduled monuments, and offer rich and varied habitats for nature conservation. Some also contain important collections of rare or specimen trees, shrubs and plant material.

Gardens and designed landscapes offer significant opportunities for education, employment, tourism and recreation. They also provide a valuable green network, and make a major contribution to the wider landscape of Scotland.

## 2. THE INVENTORY OF GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

Historic Environment Scotland has a statutory duty to compile and maintain the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. There are currently over 300 gardens and designed landscapes included on the Inventory, which is available online [here](#).

The Inventory is a list of gardens and designed landscapes of national importance. They are assessed against the following criteria:

- value as individual works of art in their own right
- historical value
- horticultural, arboricultural or silvicultural value
- architectural value
- scenic value
- nature conservation value
- archaeological value.

The importance of a site depends on the extent to which each of these values is demonstrated. For each criterion, a site may be ranked as having ‘outstanding’, ‘high’, ‘some’, ‘little’ or ‘no’ value. The more values ranked as outstanding or high, the more likely the site is to be included in the Inventory. Exceptionally a site may be of such significance in just one value that it is of national importance.

The overall integrity of a site – its wholeness and coherence – is a key consideration in the selection process. This includes an assessment of condition and the survival of significant features or fabric. To merit inclusion, a garden and designed landscape must have enough overall integrity to meet the standards for national importance.

The principles of selection are set out in detail in Annex 5 of the [\*Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement \(2016\)\*](#).

Portmore, Scottish Borders (GDL00318). Policies of a historic country house comprising a mansion house, parkland, extensive woodlands and a large walled garden with glasshouses and grotto, restored to a high quality in the late 20th century. © Historic Environment Scotland. Licensors canmore.org.uk.



The main purpose of the Inventory is to identify sites of national importance and to provide information on them. This is a basis for sustainable management of change through the planning system.

This guidance note sets out the principles that apply to development affecting Inventory gardens and designed landscapes. For further information on the designation, please see our publication *Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes 2016*.

Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes represents a wide range of nationally important sites, ranging from the policies of historic country houses to botanical gardens to urban parks and cemeteries.



Above: Linn Botanic Gardens, Argyll & Bute (GDL00401). The living plant collection at Linn is of outstanding horticultural importance for its size and diversity. It contains species from around the world, many of which are endangered in the wild or seldom seen in cultivation. © Historic Environment Scotland

Below: Baxter Park, Dundee (GDL00051). This 19th-century public park is the only complete park wholly designed by Sir Joseph Paxton in Scotland. © Historic Environment Scotland



### 3. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

Historic Environment Scotland maintains the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. This is in line with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), and is a statutory duty of the organisation.

National planning policy states that change in the historic environment should be sensitively managed to minimise adverse impacts. Changes to gardens and designed landscapes should seek to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment. Development proposals should maintain the specific qualities, character and integrity of the site.

Planning authorities are encouraged to include appropriate policies in their development plans to identify the Inventory sites in their area and outline how these sites will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. They are also encouraged to develop policies within their development plans for the identification and future management of regionally and locally important (non-Inventory) gardens and designed landscapes in their areas.

When a site is included on the Inventory it becomes a material consideration in the planning process. This means that those making decisions on planning applications have to take it into account. No additional consent is needed for undertaking works within a garden and designed landscape that is included on the Inventory.

Planning authorities have to consult Historic Environment Scotland on proposed developments that might affect an Inventory site. They should then take Historic Environment Scotland's advice into account when deciding whether permission should be granted.

Some types of development that do not normally require a planning application may need it if the development site is in a garden and designed landscape. Planning authorities can advise on whether an application is needed.

When making decisions about development that could affect an Inventory site, planning authorities have to consider national and local policies for planning and the historic environment.

Castle Kennedy, Dumfries & Galloway (GDL00093).  
© Historic Environment Scotland. Pre-application discussion to consider new development proposals.





## 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All public bodies have a responsibility for the care and protection of gardens and designed landscapes. Some have specific roles to play in this process at national or local level.

The Scottish Government sets the national policy for planning and the historic environment. These policies are then a consideration for national and local bodies. Scottish Planning Policy informs the content of planning proposals, and encourages public bodies to keep up-to-date information on gardens and designed landscapes, and assets within them.

Historic Environment Scotland maintains the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. It also gives advice on managing change affecting Inventory sites.

Organisations that make decisions about development are legally required to consult Historic Environment Scotland if changes could affect an Inventory garden and designed landscape.

Historic Environment Scotland's primary role is to advise on development that requires planning permission when requested by a planning authority. It does not have a role in the day-to-day running and maintenance of Inventory gardens and designed landscapes. There is no requirement to involve Historic Environment Scotland in the removal of individual trees, rhododendron clearance

and new planting layouts, although it can offer advice or guidance.

Planning authorities have an important role in protecting gardens and designed landscapes as the decision maker in planning applications. This applies to Inventory and non-Inventory sites. They should also consider gardens and designed landscapes in their development planning processes. This should include defining appropriate local policies and considering impacts on gardens and designed landscapes when identifying future development strategy.

Public bodies who have a responsibility for land management have to consider Inventory sites when they put together plans, policies and guidance. This allows them to manage appropriately any changes affecting gardens and designed landscapes.

## 5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON MANAGING CHANGE

Gardens and designed landscapes are by their nature evolving. Including a site on the Inventory helps to ensure that change is managed in an appropriate way. It encourages owners, developers and decision makers to protect and enhance the positive qualities and significance of a site and its constituent elements. This means seeking to retain key landscape features and characteristics for the future, while allowing the landscape to adapt. Carefully managed change will ensure that the elements which justify the designation of a site are protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Effective pre-application discussion is one of the best ways to make sure that gardens and designed landscapes are given appropriate consideration in plans and proposals. This process allows Historic Environment Scotland to give clear advice on the information necessary to support proposals at an early stage.

To manage change effectively, it is important to understand the effects it is likely to have. We recommend that this process is undertaken in three stages:

- **Identify:** understand the significance of a garden and designed landscape and identify the current baseline.

- **Assess:** assess the potential impact of a proposed change on the site and its setting.
- **Mitigate:** identify options to avoid, reduce or compensate for adverse impacts, and to enhance positive benefits.

### Stage 1: Identify the baseline

Each Inventory site description sets out clearly the criteria against which it was assessed for national importance. Although this provides a useful starting point in understanding the significance of a garden and designed landscape, more detailed information may be required in support of a development proposal. This could include design statements or landscape management plans.

### Design statements

Applicants should provide a design statement to inform the decision-making process. The statement should address the impact of proposed change, set against the significance of the site. The methodology and level of information should meet the circumstances of each case but the finalised proposals should seek to avoid, minimise and mitigate detrimental impacts on the site, and enhance positive benefits.

## Landscape management plans

Planning authorities are encouraged to obtain landscape management plans for gardens and designed landscapes. These are commissioned by owners and should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced professionals. They should incorporate historic landscape appraisals and statements of significance and identify long-term conservation needs. They can then be used to direct how change can be best accommodated – where sympathetic development might be appropriate and where development would be detrimental. In cases of divided ownership, a landscape management plan can promote management solutions that protect the integrity of the whole garden and designed landscape.

Historic Environment Scotland can offer grants towards the cost of management plans for Inventory sites.

More information is available on our website [here](#).

## Stage 2: Assess the impact

Inventory entries identify the values for which sites are designated. It is important to consider these in detail when assessing the impact of development. Any impact that might compromise these values should be avoided.

Planning authorities should consult Historic Environment Scotland when development may affect an Inventory site. Historic Environment Scotland will consider the impact that development would have on the site. This includes impacts on the specific qualities, character and integrity of an Inventory site, and the capacity of the Inventory site to accommodate the change proposed.

These impacts are normally defined in three broad categories:

- **Direct:** physical changes within an Inventory site boundary
- **Setting:** changes to land outside the boundary that makes a contribution to the experience, appreciation and understanding of an Inventory site
- **Cumulative:** development or alterations which combine with existing impacts and make them more significant.

Any of these types of change may alter people's experience, appreciation or understanding of a garden and designed landscape.

## Direct impacts

Direct impacts are physical changes within the boundary of an Inventory site. They might include changes to significant features, key views or the character of the landscape.

Significant features of a garden and designed landscape are likely to include both built structures and planting – including planting layouts or significant trees. These can be damaged or destroyed by development that has not been carefully designed. There can also be impacts on the long-term viability of trees and other plants.

Many gardens and designed landscapes have important views to, from or within the site. These may include viewpoints where long views are available, related views between significant features within the site, and sequential views.

Sites on the Inventory will also contain areas of deliberately contrived character, such as drives, gardens, parkland and woodland. Changes to land use and land cover in these areas can have an impact on the overall character of a garden and designed landscape.

Structures and features within designed landscapes may also have heritage value individually. The setting of listed and unlisted buildings, scheduled and unscheduled archaeology can be affected by development within Inventory sites.

Other types of development, not all of which require planning permission, can have a significant impact on gardens and designed landscapes. These include parking, fencing, signage, lighting, new planting, earth movement, service infrastructure, paths and pavements, and new roads and drives. All such developments should be carefully designed to minimise their impact on Inventory sites.

Sympathetic developments in walled gardens can present a particular challenge. Development should be carefully designed to take into account the special qualities and characteristics of a walled garden. For example, new development should not exceed the height of the walls, and the number and size of new openings in the wall should be limited. Finding a future sustainable use for walled gardens does not necessarily have to mean ‘development’; there is an increasing interest in re-using them as horticultural spaces.





Fasque House, Aberdeenshire (GDL00178).  
The Apple House in the Walled Garden before and  
after restoration. The building now serves as holiday  
accommodation. © Historic Environment Scotland.  
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## Impacts on setting

Inventory sites often have a planned relationship with landscape features beyond their boundaries, and these surroundings may contribute to the way they are experienced, understood and appreciated. Land outwith the boundary may provide a backdrop to a mansion house or terminate a vista. This 'borrowed' land is used as a feature to be enjoyed from the Inventory site.

Development outside an Inventory site boundary may therefore impact on the site's setting – for example, if it would affect a deliberately planned outward view. Proposals should be carefully designed and located to minimise any such impacts.

For further information on setting, see Historic Environment Scotland's [\*Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting\*](#).

## Cumulative impacts

New development affecting Inventory sites is assessed on its own merits. Sometimes development impacts that are acceptable in isolation combine to create a significant cumulative impact, eroding a site's integrity.

For example, a single dwelling in an Inventory site may not have a significant impact, but the construction of a series of houses over time may change the site's character – making it a residential area rather than a garden and designed landscape. Cumulative impacts could also include incremental changes that erode or distract from key views or relationships between features in the site.

Kinross House, Perth & Kinross (GDL00247). One of the earliest and best-known examples in Scotland of the use of the surrounding landscape in a garden design. Sir William Bruce laid out the house and designed landscape in the late 17th century with a planned axial alignment towards the castle in Loch Leven, a historic building and landscape feature beyond its boundary.  
© Historic Environment Scotland. Licensor canmore.org.uk



### Stage 3: Mitigate and enhance

Good practice for mitigating adverse impacts identifies a hierarchy of preferred options. The highest of these is to avoid impacts. Where this is not possible, developers should aim to reduce impacts through design.

Proposals should also identify enhancement opportunities where possible. Such measures are likely to be considered as compensatory. This is the least preferred option, and should only be considered as mitigation when opportunities for avoidance and reduction have already been explored.

#### Mitigating impact by careful design

Proposed development should seek to avoid significant adverse impact on Inventory sites. Where this is not practical, impacts should be mitigated by careful design. A number of factors can contribute to this process:

- **Site selection:** development should avoid the more sensitive parts of an Inventory site.
- **Development layout:** existing site features, topography and established policy woodland should be used to minimise adverse visual or other impacts.

- **Building design:** form, orientation, massing, height and materials of new structures should take account of the specific qualities and character of the site.
- **Landscape design:** well-planned and executed landscape design may reinforce or enhance existing landscape features and character, and help to accommodate development within the site.
- **Screening:** screening can be effective in certain situations. New areas of policy woodlands or specimen trees can help blend a new development into its surroundings, enhance the planted element of a garden and designed landscape and ensure its long-term survival. However, if implemented without an understanding of the essential character of the garden and designed landscape, screening can sometimes increase the visual impact of a new development. A well-designed building that has been carefully located to sit comfortably in the garden and designed landscape may not require any screening, as demonstrated below.

Abbotsford, Scottish Borders (GDL00001). The new Visitor Centre was designed to sit comfortably in its designed landscape setting and has not required substantial screening. © Photo by Paul Zanre: pzphotography.com.





Pre-application engagement should include discussion of how measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be applied. Sometimes, adverse impacts cannot be mitigated and will have to be taken into account when deciding whether to grant planning permission.

### Identifying opportunities for enhancement

Opportunities to enhance gardens and designed landscapes should be identified as early as possible. Such measures are unlikely to avoid or reduce impacts, but may provide benefits for the historic environment.

Development has the potential to add value where it includes the repair and restoration of important elements of an Inventory site. This can be guided by a landscape management plan, which will identify and prioritise works to protect and enhance the special qualities of an Inventory site.

Targeted land management can also bring benefits such as removal or relocation of woodland infill to re-open important views or restore areas of parkland. Historic Environment Scotland can offer advice and guidance on proposals at the request of the planning authority.



Penicuik, Midlothian (GDL00311). View from Old Penicuik House towards the Ramsay Monument before and after the felling of 20th-century woodland and reinstatement of the Chinese Gates. A key view within the Inventory site has been re-opened.  
© Historic Environment Scotland



## 6. CLIMATE CHANGE

Gardens and designed landscapes are a fragile resource and are vulnerable to the threat of climate change, and new pests and diseases. New plant diseases and pests can have a devastating impact on planted elements within gardens and designed landscapes, for example resulting in the loss of mature policy woodlands or specialist horticultural collections.

Similarly, changing weather patterns associated with climate change, such as increased frequency and intensity of rainfall and storms, can cause significant erosion, landslip and destruction of mature woodlands within Inventory sites.

Historic Environment Scotland is responding to the issue of climate change and its impact on the historic environment. For further information on our role and research strategy, see our [website](#).

Windblown tree within a designed landscape.  
© Historic Environment Scotland.



# 7. CONSENTS

Some elements within Inventory gardens and designed landscapes may have individual designations, such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments or natural heritage assets. You can check this online on the [Scotland's Environment website](#).

## Listed buildings

Listed building consent is required for any work to a listed building which will affect its character: see the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. The planning authority is the main point of contact for all applications for listed building consent. It decides whether consent is required, and can offer advice on applications.

The planning authority will consider applications using guidance such as Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment series and other national policy documents including Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (2016) and Scottish Planning Policy (2014).

## Scheduled monuments

Scheduled monument consent is required for any works to a monument scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Scheduled monument consent is determined by Historic Environment Scotland. We offer a free pre-application discussion and checking service for scheduled monument consent

applications. You can find out more about this on our [website](#).

## Natural heritage assets

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are those areas of land and water designated for the special interest of its flora, fauna, geology or geomorphological features. This is a statutory designation made by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Further information can be found on [SNH's website](#).

Cowden Japanese-style Garden, Clackmannanshire (GDL00402). The vision of Ella Christie, a female explorer in the early 20th century, the garden was designed and maintained by Japanese practitioners. Despite vandalism in the 1960s, much of its essential structure endured. It is an exceptional representative of the Japanese-style garden tradition in the UK. Restoration started in 2013, guided by a conservation management plan. © Sara Stewart



## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Historic Environment Scotland is charged with ensuring that our historic environment provides a strong foundation in building a successful future for Scotland. One of our roles is to provide advice about managing change in the historic environment.

### Policy

Relevant policies for Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes can be found at: [Scottish Planning Policy \(2014\)](#)

[Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement \(2016\)](#)

[Our Place in Time - The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland](#)

Advice on how to handle archaeological matters as part of the planning process:

[Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology](#)

### Guidance

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes:

Historic Environment Scotland's webpage providing information on the Inventory can be found [here](#).

Historic Environment Scotland, [Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland: A Guide for Owners, Occupiers and Managers 2016](#)

Landscape management plan grants:

[www.historicenvironment.scot/grants-and-funding/our-grants/landscape-management-plan-grants-scheme](#)

Planning authority contacts:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/Roles/Planning-Authorities/Information](#)

Local historic environment records are a primary source of historic environment data.

[PASTMAP](#) is a website developed to identify heritage sites.

[HLAMap](#) is a website presenting data from the Historic Land-use Assessment which analyses and records the visible traces of past land use within the Scottish landscape.

Forestry Commission Scotland: The [historic environment pages](#) contain useful information, advice and guidance on all aspects of the historic environment in Scotland's woodlands and forests. This includes a practice guide:

[Conserving and managing trees and woodlands in Scotland's designed landscapes.](#)

Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage is a national charity formed to promote and protect the historic gardens and designed landscapes of Scotland: [www.sglh.org](http://www.sglh.org)

J. Watkins and T. Wright, *The Management and Maintenance of Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes* (London, 2007)

Dawyck, Scottish Borders (GDL00134). A historic arboretum managed by the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. The visitor centre sits sympathetically in its wooded designed landscape setting.  
© Historic Environment Scotland.





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